

# Pysanka: Ukranian Easter Eggs

## What Are They?

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Susan Richardson shown with eggs using the kistka for a simple design.

Midway—"Each egg tells a story," said Susan Richardson. "Colors, symbols and designs all relate the wishes and intentions of the giver."

Pysanka, the art of Ukranian Easter Egg decorating has been handed down through the generations. Mother's instructing daughters in this beautiful and delicate art form. For centuries it was passed on from mother to daughter on the 8th birthday.

Modern generations have all but lost this ornate tradition. Placed on the "lost arts" list, this amazing form of expression is making a miraculous comeback as art.

Begun over 2,000 years ago, before the time of Christ, Ukranian ancestors decorated eggs in somewhat paganistic ritual. The eggs were believed to have had great powers, were planted with the spring crops. And planted with the fall harvest. There were other rites which the power of the egg was called upon.

Brightly decorated and symbolically designed, the eggs were a deep part of the Ukranian Culture when Prince Vladimir brought Christianity to the area.

With acceptance of Christianity, the pagan symbols took on Christian meanings. According to legend, as long as the pysanky are decorated, goodness will prevail over evil throughout the world.

Susan Richardson, of South Jordan embraced the art of Pysanka only 8 months ago. Encouraged by her young daughter to attend classes at the local library, Susan came as a mere observer.

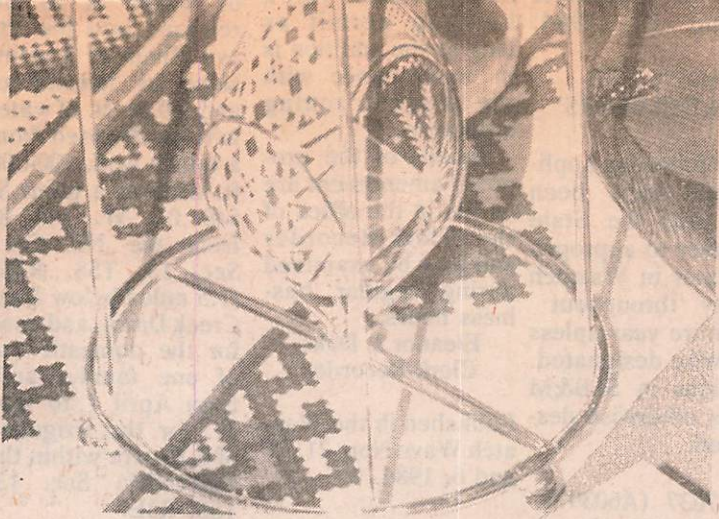
She bought her Kistka, a wax cup pen, and dyes, and an instruction book. She called her instructor Jean Godfrey of Salt Lake and asked her if she could give her some pointers.

Jean was more than happy to help anyone who was interested in learning the art of Pysanka.

"When I saw her eggs I asked her if she wanted to teach the class," said Jean. "Her eggs were that good."

Jean explained that the art is a matter of patience and desire. That in all the classes she





Shafts of wheat, tree branches, and swirls all have meaning to the eggs.



Ornately displayed, the eggs become family heirlooms.



Lines are first etched on with a pencil for beginners.

excell and those that will drop out.

Jean Godfrey moved from Vermont to West Valley a number of years ago. She learned to do Pysanka almost 27 years ago.

She is a Ukrainian descent. Her ancestors were originally from the area where Pysanka first began. Her genealogy has direct links to Prince Vladimir. Pysanka is forbidden in Ukrain by the Russian government.

She didn't learn her techniques from her mother however, they were taught her at a later date.

Jean explained that Pysanka "If you do it the Ukrainian way, is with raw eggs. I do it the Scottish way, blow out the egg and then eat it."

To really do Pysanka well, she explained, that a person needs to understand 3 things: the eggs, the dyes and the art form.

"I'll have to take credit for the Christmas use," said Jean. "In the old country, they were used for Easter and special occasions."

The Christmas decorations were began as Jean and family and friends decorated a Christmas tree for Primary Children's some years back.

The tree was covered with 600 different eggs. All the eggs had original designs.

She jokingly said that after all